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DID GOP ADMINISTRATIONS HUSH UP KOREA SCANDAL DETAILS?

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There are growing indications, underscored whenever possible by appointees of President Carter, that details of the Korean influence-buying scandal were known — and possibly hushed up — by previous, Republican administrations.

Adm. Stansfield Turner, director of the CIA, indicated strongly yesterday that information gleaned from intelligence sources, facts he characterized as having "important implications" to a Justice Department criminal investigation, may have been known by law enforcement officials of the Nixon and Ford administrations but never pursued.

After reviewing for members of the Senate Ethics Committee the data that he said had been turned over to the Justice Department, Turner was asked by reporters if he suspected that any of the material previously had been withheld by his agency.

Evidence bearing on the Korean investigations "has been forwarded to appropriate agencies" as was obtained by the CIA, Turner responded.

ASKED IF SUCH information had been made available to the Justice Department before last year, when former President Ford finally ordered an investigation, Turner replied, "That's my understanding."

The CIA director did not detail the information or specify precisely when his agency began providing it to the Justice Department.

Turner is the second Carter appointee in two days to suggest to reporters that officials of previous Republican administrations had been made aware of attempts by suspected agents of the Korean government to gain influence with members of Congress but had failed to aggressively investigate the allegations.

Asst. Atty. Gen. Benjamin R. Civiletti, briefing Democratic members of the House Wednesday, raised officially for the first time the possibility that there may have been efforts in past years to cover up activities on behalf of the Koreans.

Without making specific allegations, Civiletti stated flatly that the Carter Justice Department "will cer-

tainly not ignore the possibilities" that "improper, illegal" efforts were made prior to this year to delay an investigation of the scheme or of Tongsun Park, the mysterious Korean businessman who is suspected of being a central figure in it.

CIVILETTI, who, as head of the Justice Department's criminal division, is in charge of the Korean inquiry, indicated that it was not until Carter took office this year that a full team of federal investigators was assigned to the probe.

A memorandum, a copy of which has been obtained by The Washington Star, buttresses the notion that the Nixon administration may at least have suspected, possibly as long ago as 1971, that Korean money was being channeled to members of Congress.

The August, 1971, memo was written by Lyn Nofziger, then on the staff of the Republican National Committee, and forwarded to Jack Caulfield and John Dean, then White House assistants to President Nixon. The memorandum was obtained from White House files by the Senate Watergate committee, but not included in the material made public when that panel was disbanded.

In the document, Nofziger appears to be warning the Nixon White House that Thomas H. Kuchel, a former assistant Republican leader of the Senate, had become affiliated with a California law firm that had made cash contributions to a number of Democratic candidates.

THE NOFZIGER memorandum notes pointedly that the law firm, Wyman, Bautzer, Finnel, Rothman and Kuchel, was, at that time, a registered agent for the embassy of South Korea.

"Mr. Kuchel is the Washington partner of Wyman, Bautzer, Kinnel, Rothman and Kuchel," Nofziger wrote. "They represent the Republic of Korea and various sugar interests in Colombia. Lobby reports show that they gave campaign contributions to the following partial list."

The document goes on to list 18 campaign contributions made by Kuchel's firm during 1970.

There is no suggestion in the document that the campaign contributions cited were derived from Korean funds or made at the direction of the Korean embassy. In fact, according to alien registration records on file at the Justice Department, Kuchel's

HOWEVER, at least one congressional committee investigating Korean activity in the United States, the House International Relations subcommittee on international organizations, has obtained the document and is exploring the possibility that the Korean embassy might have influenced the dissemination of other campaign contributions by the firm.

Investigators for the panel questioned Kuchel in California earlier this week.

In a telephone interview, Kuchel, who retired from Congress in 1969, flatly denied that the Koreans had any involvement in his firm's political activities, or that any donations were derived from Korean funds.

"Hell no, they didn't," the former California senator replied when asked if the Korean embassy had had any voice in selecting candidates that received contributions. "We provided legal services... that's all."

"I NEVER HEARD of Tongsun Park or any of this other stuff until I read it in the newspapers," he declared.

Kuchel noted — and records on file with the Justice Department confirm — that the law firm made numerous contributions to political candidates both before it began representing the Korean embassy and after its connection with the Koreans was severed at the end of 1973. He also pointed out that a principal partner in the firm, Eugene L. Wyman, had for years been a major Democratic fund-raiser in California.

Wyman died in January 1973.

Kuchel, who said he was shown the Nofziger memorandum for the first time by investigators for the House subcommittee, speculated that the White House was concerned about his firm's contributions to Democratic candidates, rather than its connections with the Korean embassy.

Nofziger, he suggested, "probably was warning (the White House) about our Democratic ties in case I was being considered for any kind of position in the (1972 presidential) campaign in California."

Kuchel noted a cover attachment to the memo, apparently in Nofziger's handwriting, which read, "Anyone wanting to use Tom Kuchel should see this."

Nofziger, also reached in California, said he could not remember writing the six-year-old memorandum. He also said he could not recall if there had been any suspicion among Republican officials at that